



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**ISOLATION, IDENTIFICATION AND ANTIOXIDATIVE ACTIVITY OF  
PHENOLICS IN PALM OIL MILL EFFLUENT**

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**ISOLATION, IDENTIFICATION AND ANTIOXIDATIVE  
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**By**

**NORMALA BT HALIMOON**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, University Putra Malaysia, in  
Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**January 2006**



## DEDICATION

*Bismillahirrahmannirrahim,*

*Alhamdulillah.*

*Specially dedicated to my beloved father, Halimoon Bin Hamid and my mother, Rahamah Bt Mohd, my loving husband, Khairul Husni Bin Kamaruddin, my cute daughter, Nurhusna Aina Bt Khairul Husni, and my handsome son, Muhammad Zafran Bin Khairul Husni, all my siblings and my friends.*

*Thanks for your loving support during the difficult time.*

*Amin.*

Abstract of dissertation submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia  
in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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PHENOLICS IN PALM OIL MILL EFFLUENT**

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**January 2006**

**Chairman: Associate Professor Azizah Binti Abdul Hamid, PhD**

**Faculty: Food Science and Technology**

The objectives of the study are to isolate, and identify the phenolic compounds present in the palm oil mill effluent (POME) and evaluate their antioxidative activity. Combinations of column and partition chromatography were used in the isolation of the phenolic compounds. Antioxidative activities of the POME fractions were evaluated for free radical scavenging activity, lipid thiocyanate,  $\beta$ -carotene-linoleate and reducing assays. Identification of the phenolic compounds in POME filtrate was carried out using high performance liquid chromatography (HPLC), followed by confirmation of the compounds using gas chromatography mass spectrometry (GC/MS) and liquid chromatography mass spectrometry (LC/MS). The study revealed the presence of cinnamic acid derivatives, which were measured at 320 nm. These included chlorogenic, *p*-coumaric, caffeic, ferulic acids and rutin hydrate. Benzoic acid derivatives, which were identified as protocatechuic, gentisic, *p*-hydroxybenzoic and vanillic acids were also present when measured at 260 nm. Hydrolysis of the sample did not affect the

chromatographic pattern obtained indicating the stability of the phenolic compounds in the POME filtrate. Flavan-3-ol groups (catechins) were identified from ytterbium precipitation method. Four fractions have been isolated from POME filtrate based on flash chromatography coupled with uv/vis detection. The antioxidative activity of each fraction was then evaluated. All the POME fractions demonstrated excellent antioxidative activity in all the assays used. This is especially true for both Fractions 3 and 4. Fraction 1 exhibited highest antioxidative activity based on reducing assay followed by Fraction 3 indicating the excellent metal chelating ability of the phenolics in these fractions. The POME fractions were found to contain different levels of total phenolics, which did not necessarily correspond to the strength of antioxidative activity, measured for each fraction. Fraction 3 showed strong free radical scavenger and phenolic content was also high. Fraction 2 showed low antioxidant activity, while total phenolic content was low. However, Fraction 4 showed high antioxidant activity with low total phenolic content. This indicates the presence of different phenolic compounds in the different fractions. Results showed that Fraction 1 contained an unknown polar compound and protocatechuic acid with strong metal chelating activity, Fraction 2 was rich in *p*-hydroxybenzoic acid, Fraction 3 contained three unknown cinnamic acid derivatives and Fraction 4 contained known cinnamic acid derivatives compounds including *p*-coumaric acid, rutin hydrate and ferulic acid with lower polarity. The cinnamics in Fraction 3 consistently exhibited higher antioxidative properties compared with benzoics in Fraction 2. Combination study of the fractions revealed that mixture of Fraction 3 and ascorbic acid had better free radical scavenging activity. However, the synergistic effect was observed only at low concentration of 2.5 and 5 mg/l of Fraction 3 and ascorbic acid. The

individual compounds of Fraction 3 (cinnamic acid derivatives) including Compounds 14, 15 and 16 exhibited the highest free radical scavenging activity. Highest antioxidative activity was also measured when Compounds 15 and 16 were combined (double combined) while for triple combinations, the highest activity was seen with Compounds 13, 14, and 15 at 15 mg/l of total phenolic contents. The results showed that there was a synergistic effect between the compounds in particular those in Fraction 3. GC/MS and LC/MS were employed to confirm identify of unknown compounds in Fraction 3. Three compounds in Fraction 3 were observed to exhibit similar absorbance spectra using HPLC with diode array detection. LC/MS revealed presence of dimer with maximum molecular weight of 335 m/z. GC/MS revealed the presence of compounds with a general cinnamic acid structure and derivatives with silylate group. Antioxidative activity of the compounds was in the following order; Compound 14 > Compound 16 > Compound 15. Compounds 14, 15 and 16 were tentatively identified as 2,4-dihydroxycinnamic acid, 2,5-dihydroxycinnamic acid and 2,3-dihydroxycinnamic acid.

Abstrak disertasi yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia  
sebagai memenuhi syarat untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**PEMENCILAN, PENGENALPASTIAN DAN AKTIVITI ANTIOKSIDAN  
FENOLIK DALAM AIR SISA KELAPA SAWIT**

Oleh

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Objektif kajian ini merangkumi pemencilan, dan mengenalpastian sebatian fenolik yang wujud dalam air sisa buangan minyak kelapa sawit (POME) dan menilai aktiviti antioksidannya. Gabungan turus dan titikan kromatografi telah digunakan untuk memencilkan sebatian fenolik. Aktiviti antioksidan fraksi POME telah dinilai dengan menggunakan asai aktiviti memerangkap radikal bebas, asai  $\beta$ -karoten-linoleat, asai tiosianat dan aktiviti penurunan. Sebatian fenolik dikenal pasti di dalam tapisan POME menggunakan kromatografi cecair berkeupayaan tinggi (HPLC), diikuti dengan proses pemastian menggunakan kromatografi gas spektrometrik jisim (GC/MS) dan kromatografi cecair spektrometrik jisim (LC/MS). Kajian ini telah menunjukkan kehadiran terbitan asid cinnamik terdapat di dalam tapisan POME pada 320 nm termasuklah asid klorogenik, asid *p*-koumarik, asid kaffeik, asid ferulik dan rutin hidrat. Terbitan asid benzoik iaitu asid protokatekuik, asid gentisik, asid *p*-hidroksibenzoik dan asid vanillic juga hadir pada 260 nm. Sampel yang dihidrolisis didapati tiada perubahan kromatografi menunjukkan

tapisan POME hanya mengandung sebatian fenolik yang stabil. Kumpulan Flavan-3-ol (katekin) dikenalpasti melalui kaedah pemendakan ytterbium. Empat fraksi telah dipencilkan dari tapisan POME berdasarkan imbasan kromatografi bersama dengan penentuan uv/vis. Aktiviti antioksidan setiap fraksi telah dinilai. Semua fraksi POME yang diuji menunjukkan aktiviti antioksidan yang tinggi dalam semua asai yang digunakan. Keadaan ini adalah jelas bagi kedua-dua Fraksi 3 dan 4. Aktiviti antioksidan yang tinggi bagi Fraksi 1 berdasarkan asai penurunan diikuti dengan Fraksi 3, ini menunjukkan bahawa fenolik berkebolehan mengikat logam dalam fraksi tersebut. Fraksi POME didapati mengandung sebatian fenolik yang berbeza dan aktiviti antioksidan yang ditentukan tidak perlu bergantung di antara satu sama lain. Fraksi 3 menunjukkan perangkap radikal bebas yang kuat dan kandungan fenoliknya juga tinggi. Fraksi 2 menunjukkan aktiviti antioksidan yang rendah sementara kandungan jumlah fenoliknya juga rendah. Walau bagaimanapun, Fraksi 4 menunjukkan aktiviti antioksidan yang tinggi dengan kandungan fenolik yang rendah. Ini menunjukkan kehadiran sebatian fenolik yang berbeza di dalam fraksi yang berbeza. Keputusan juga menunjukkan bahawa Fraksi 1 mengandung sebatian polar yang tidak diketahui termasuk asid protokatekuik dengan aktiviti pengikatan logam yang kuat, Fraksi 2 kaya dengan asid *p*-hidroksibenzoik, Fraksi 3 mengandung tiga terbitan asid cinnamik yang tidak diketahui dan Fraksi 4 mengandung terbitan asid cinnamik termasuklah asid *p*-kumarik, rutin hidrat dan asid ferulik iaitu sebatian yang tidak polar. Terbitan asid cinnamik dalam Fraksi 3 menunjukkan sifat antioksidan yang tinggi secara seragam berbanding dengan terbitan asid benzoic dalam Fraksi 2. Kajian gabungan sebatian fraksi POME mendapati campuran Fraksi 3 dengan asid askorbik menunjukkan aktiviti perangkap radikal bebas



yang lebih baik. Bagaimanapun, kesan sinergistik hanya pada kepekatan yang rendah iaitu 2.5 dan 5 mg/l bagi Fraksi 3 dan asid askorbik. Sebatian tunggal Fraksi 3 (terbitan asid cinnamik) termasuklah sebatian 14, 15, dan 16 dalam menunjukkan aktiviti perangkap radikal bebas yang tertinggi. Aktiviti antioksidan yang tinggi juga ditentukan bagi gabungan dua sebatian 15 dan 16 serta gabungan tiga sebatian iaitu sebatian 13, 14 dan 15 memberikan aktiviti yang tinggi pada jumlah fenolik 15 mg/l. Ini menunjukkan kesan sinergistik berlaku diantara sebatian yang wujud dalam Fraksi 3. GC/MS dan LC/MS telah digunakan untuk memastikan sebatian fenolik yang tidak dikenalpasti. Keputusan HPLC dengan penentuan diod arrai menunjukkan bahawa tiga sebatian di dalam Fraksi 3 didapati menunjukkan absorban spektra yang sama. LC/MS menunjukkan kehadiran dimer dengan berat molekul yang maksima pada 335 m/z. GC/MS menunjukkan kehadiran struktur umum asid cinnamik dan terbitannya dengan sililate. Aktiviti antioksidan adalah seperti berikut; Sebatian 14 > Sebatian 16 > Sebatian 15. Sebatian 14, 15 dan 16 dikenali sebagai asid 2,4-dihidroksicinnamik, asid 2,5-dihidroksicinnamik dan asid 2,3-dihidroksicinnamik.

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I certify that an Examination Committee met on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2006 to conduct the final examination of Normala Bt Halimoon on her Doctor of Philosophy thesis entitled "Isolation, Identification and Antioxidative Activity of Phenolics in Palm Oil Mill Effluent" in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the relevant degree. Members of the Examination Committee are as follows:

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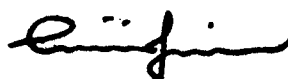
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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations, which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or other institutions.



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Date: **21 MAR 2006**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>DEDICATION</b>	ii
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	iii
<b>ABSTRAK</b>	vi
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	ix
<b>APPROVAL</b>	xi
<b>DECLARATION</b>	xiii
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	xviii
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	xix
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>	xxii
 <b>CHAPTER</b>	
 1 INTRODUCTION	 1
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	4
2.1 Oil Palm Production	4
2.1.1 Palm Oil Mill Effluent (POME) Pollution	4
2.1.2 Origin of Palm Oil Waste	7
2.1.3 Useful Products from Agricultural Wastes	9
2.2 Antioxidants	9
2.2.1 Sources of Antioxidants	11
2.2.2 Phenolic Compounds	13
2.2.3 Structures of Phenolic Acids	14
2.2.4 Structures of Flavonoid Compounds	17
2.2.5 Potency and Effectiveness of Phenolic Antioxidants	19
2.2.6 Structure-Activity Relationship	22
2.2.7 Glycoside Phenolic Compounds and the Effect of Hydrolysis	26
2.3 Sources of Free Radicals	27
2.3.1 Mechanism of Lipid Peroxidation	29
2.3.2 Roles of Antioxidants Against Free Radicals	31
2.4 Diseases Associated with Oxidative Stress	33
2.4.1 Cancer	34
2.4.2 Cardiovascular Diseases	36
2.4.3 Other Diseases	39
2.5 Evaluation of Antioxidant Activities	43
2.5.1 Free Radical Scavenging Assay	43
2.5.2 Thiocyanate Assay	44
2.5.3 $\beta$ -Carotene-Linoleate Assay	46
2.5.4 Reducing Activity	46



	2.5.5 Other Assays of Antioxidant Activities	47
2.6	The Uses of Antioxidant in Pharmaceutical and Nutraceutical Products	49
2.7	Combination Studies – Synergistic Effect	50
2.8	Isolation and Separation Techniques for Bioactive Compounds	51
2.9	Instruments Used in the Confirmation Study	52
	2.9.1 High Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC)	53
	2.9.2 Gas Chromatography/Mass Spectrometry (GC/MS)	54
	2.9.3 Liquid Chromatography Mass/Spectrometry (LC/MS)	56
3	GENERAL MATERIALS AND METHODS	57
3.1	Experimental Design	57
3.2	Chemicals and Standards	59
3.3	Sample Extraction	60
3.4	Determination of Total Phenolic Content	61
3.5	Statistical Analysis	62
4	ANALYSIS OF POME FILTRATE	63
4.1	Introduction	63
4.2	Materials and Methods	64
	4.2.1 Phenolic Compounds Profiling of POME	64
	4.2.2 Analysis of Hydrolysed POME	66
	4.2.3 Recovery of Phenolics from Ytterbium Precipitation Method	67
	4.2.4 Phenolics Profiling of Mesocarp and Epicarp of Oil Palm and Epicarp of Red Grape	69
4.3	Results and Discussion	70
	4.3.1 Detection of Phenolics Using Different Wavelength	70
	4.3.2 Phenolics Profiling of the Filtrate	74
	4.3.3 Analyse of Hydrolysed POME	80
	4.3.4 Phenolics Recovery from Ytterbium Precipitation	83
	4.3.5 Comparison between the Extracts from POME, Oil Palm Mesocarp and Epicarp and Grape Epicarp	88
4.4	Conclusion	91
5	ISOLATION OF THE PHENOLICS IN POME AND THEIR ANTIOXIDANT ACTIVITIES	93
5.1	Introduction	93
5.2	Materials and Methods	94
	5.2.1 Isolation of the Phenolics using Flash Pack Chromatography	94
	5.2.2 Determination of Antioxidant Activity of the Fractions	95
	5.2.3 Identification of the Isolated Fractions Using HPLC	98
	5.2.4 Isolation of Phenolics Using TLC	98
5.3	Results and Discussion	100
	5.3.1 Total Phenolic Compounds in the Different POME	



	Fractions	100
	5.3.2 Evaluation of the Antioxidant Activity of the Fractions	104
	5.3.3 Identification of Phenolics Using HPLC	119
	5.3.4 Identification of Phenolics Using Thin Layer Chromatography	121
	5.3.5 Structure-Activity Relationship of Identified Phenolic Fractions	125
5.4	Conclusion	133
6	SYNERGISTIC EFFECT OF FRACTION 3 AND PHENOLIC COMPOUNDS FROM POME FILTRATE	135
6.1	Introduction	135
6.2	Materials and Methods	137
	6.2.1 Combination Studies on Free Radical Scavenging Activity of Fraction 3 and Ascorbic Acid	137
	6.2.2 Combination Studies on Free Radical Scavenging Activity of Phenolic Compounds Collected from HPLC	137
6.3	Results and Discussion	138
	6.3.1 Combination Studies on Free Radical Scavenging Activity of Fraction 3 and Ascorbic Acid	138
	6.3.2 Free Radical Scavenging Activity of the Phenolic Compounds	141
6.4	Conclusion	153
7	CONFIRMATION OF PHENOLIC COMPOUNDS USING LC/MS AND GC/MS	154
7.1	Introduction	154
7.2	Materials and Methods	156
	7.2.1 High Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC) Analysis of Fraction 3	156
	7.2.2 Gas Chromatography/Mass Spectrometry (GC/MS) Analysis of Fraction 3	156
	7.2.2.1 Identification of Compounds	157
	7.2.3 Liquid Chromatography/Mass Spectrometry (LC/MS) Analysis of Fraction 3	158
7.3	Results and Discussion	158
	7.3.1 Identification of Unknow Phenolics in Fraction 3 Using HPLC	158
	7.3.2 Confirmation of Phenolics in Fraction 3 Using GC/MS	162
	7.3.3 Confirmation of Phenolics in Fraction3 Using LC/MS	164
7.4	Conclusion	166
8	POSTULATES OF THE STUDY	168
9	GENERAL DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	172

9.1	General Discussion	172
9.2	General Conclusion	175
9.3	Recommendations	175
BIBLIOGRAPHY		177
APPENDICES		194
BIODATA OF THE AUTHOR		198

## LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Characteristics of palm oil mill effluent	5
2	Regulatory standards for palm oil mill effluent discharge	6
3	Groups of phenolic compounds	21
4	Concentration of phenolics present in filtrate extracts	80
5	Total phenolic content in filtrate fractions	102
6	The percentage inhibition of antioxidant activities of filtrate fractions	126
7	Free radical scavenging assay of combined Fraction 3 and ascorbic acid	138

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1 Palm oil milling	8
2 Basic structures of phenolic acids: a) cinnamic acid, b) benzoic acid derivatives	14
3a Chemical structures of benzoic acid derivatives	15
3b Chemical structures of cinnamic acid derivatives	16
4 The structure of flavonoid compounds	18
5 The valence bond isomers of phenol	23
6 Pathways for the synthesis of reactive oxygen species	27
7 Mechanism of lipid peroxidation	29
8 The lipid peroxidation chain reaction	30
9 Reaction of antioxidants with free radicals	32
10 Structure and reduction of 1, 1 – diphenyl – 2 – picrylhydrozyl (DPPH)	44
11 Reduction/oxidation reactions	45
12 Mechanism of chelating metal ion ( $\text{Fe}^{3+}$ ) of phenolics	47
13 Experimental design	58
14 HPLC chromatograms of filtrate extracted at different wavelengths (220, 260, 280 and 320 nm)	71
15 Absorbance spectra of phenolic acid groups using photodiode array (PDA)	72
16 3-Dimensional HPLC chromatograms of phenolic compounds of Mixed Commercial Standards (A) and filtrate sample (B) from 210 to 600 nm using PDA	76
17 Absorbance spectra of identified phenolic compounds of benzoic	

	and cinnamic acid derivatives in filtrate sample using PDA	77
18	HPLC chromatograms of hydrolysis products in filtrate sample at different pHs (2, 5 and 10), extracted at 260 and 320 nm	82
19a	HPLC chromatograms of ytterbium precipitation method of original filtrate extract (OFE) (A), filtrate extract supernatant (FES) (B) and recovery filtrate extract (RFE) (C) at 220 nm wavelength detection	84
19b	HPLC chromatograms of ytterbium precipitation method of original filtrate extract (OFE) (A), filtrate extract supernatant (FES) (B) and recovery filtrate extract (RFE) (C) at 260 nm wavelength detection	86
19c	HPLC chromatograms of ytterbium precipitation method of original filtrate extract (OFE) (A), filtrate extract supernatant (FES) (B) and recovery filtrate extract (RFE) (C) at 320 nm wavelength detection	87
20	Comparison of phenolic compounds in filtrate sample (A), epicarp (B) and mesocarp (C) of oil palm and epicarp of grape (D) by HPLC	89
21	Gradient elution of isolated phenolic tubes (A) and isolation of four phenolic fractions in the filtrate sample at 260, 280 and 320 nm (B)	101
22	Total phenolic compounds in collection tubes	103
23	Free radical scavenging activity of filtrate fractions at 100 mg/l	106
24	Antioxidant activity of filtrate fractions at 100 mg/l as measured by lipid thiocyanate assay	110
25	Antioxidant activity of filtrate fractions as measured by $\beta$ -carotene-linoleate assay at 100 mg/l	114
26	Reducing activity of filtrate fractions	117
27	3-Dimensional HPLC profile of Fractions 1 – 4	120
28	Thin layer chromatography of phenolic standards (A) and filtrate fractions (B)	121
29	HPLC analysis of fractions originally separated by thin layer chromatography	124

30	Combination study of free radical scavenging activities of Fraction 3 and ascorbic acid	139
31	The 2-dimension chromatogram of phenolics filtrate at 260 nm using HPLC	142
32	The 3-dimensional HPLC profile of filtrate at 200 to 600 nm wavelengths	143
33	Free radical scavenging activity of single collected peaks (Compounds 1-20) at 15 mg/l each	144
34	Free radical scavenging activity of two combined collected compounds	151
35	Free radical scavenging activity of three combined collected compounds	152
36	HPLC chromatogram of Fraction 3 containing Compounds 14, 15 and 16 at 320 nm wavelength	160
37	Overlay absorbance spectra of Compounds 14, 15 and 16 by PDA	160
38	Absorbance spectra of Compounds 14, 15 and 16 by PDA	161
39	Chemical structure of the cinnamic group at 150 m/z (A) and cinnamic acid combined with silylate derivatives at 220 m/z molecular weights (B) which obtained in Fraction 3 by gas chromatography mass spectrometry (GC/MS)	163
40	Mass spectrum of identified phenolic compounds of Fraction 3 with [335-1] m/z molecular weight by liquid chromatography mass spectrometry analysis (LC/MS)	165
41	The effective of caffeic, ferulic and <i>p</i> -coumaric of cinnamic acid derivatives	169
42	The postulated of cinnamic acid derivatives of unknown compounds in Fraction 3	170

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AOA	antioxidant activity
APCI	atmospheric pressure chemical ionization
BOD	biological oxygen demand
BSTFA	bis(trimethylsilyl)trifluoro-acetamide
C	carbon
COD	chemical oxygen demand
Cu	copper
DCM	dichloromethane
DNA	deoxyribonucleic acid
°C	degree Celsius
DOE	Department of Environment
DPPH	1, 1 – diphenyl – 2 - picrylhydrozyl
ELSD	evaporative light scattering detector
ESI	electrospray ionization
Fe	ferric
Fe <sup>3+</sup>	ferrous
FES	filtrate extract supernatant
FC	Folin-Ciocalteu
FPLC	flash pack liquid chromatography
FTC	ferric thiocyanate
GAE	gallic acid equivalent
GC/MS	gas chromatography/mass spectrometry
g	gravity
g	gram
HCl	hydrochloric acid
HPLC	high performance liquid chromatography
hr	hour
H <sub>2</sub> O <sub>2</sub>	hydrogen peroxide

LC/MS	Liquid chromatography/mass spectrometry
LDL	low-density lipoprotein
Nm	nanometer
MPOB	Malaysia Palm Oil Board
mg	milligram
mg/g	milligrams per gram
min	minute
μm	micrometer
μl	microlitre
mg/l	milligram per litre
ml	millilitre
mm	millimeter
M	molar
OD	optical density
OFE	original filtrate extract
O&G	oil & grease
OH	hydroxyl radicals
OMWW	olive mill wastewater
O <sub>2</sub>	superoxide anions
PDA	photodiode array detector
CPO	crude palm oil
POME	palm oil mill effluent
ppm	parts per million
%	percentage
RFE	recovered filtrate extract
ROS	radical oxygen species
ROOH	lipid peroxy radicals
TCA	trichloroacetic acid
TFA	trifluoroacetic acid
TLC	thin layer chromatography
TS	total solids



<b>t/t</b>	<b>tonne per tonne</b>
<b>SS</b>	<b>suspended solids</b>
<b>v/v</b>	<b>volume per volume</b>
<b>Yb-ppt</b>	<b>ytterbium-precipitated</b>
<b>Yb<sup>3+</sup></b>	<b>ytterbium ion</b>

